"Sangam" brand of condoms and not other makes of condoms. However, in order to make condoms available in the Targeted Intervention areas, 92 Nos. of Community Based Distributors have been appointed to market all brands of condoms.

Sale of fake medicines

764. SHRI K. CHANDRAN PILLAI: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a recent raid by the Karnataka Lok Ayukta' revealed that a large number of fake medicines are being sold in the country;

(b) if so, whether any inquiries have been conducted to ascertain intensity of the problem;

(c) whether Government have taken any measures to safeguard interest of the public; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) to (b) As per the information made available by the Drugs Controller of Karnataka, the Lok Ayukta raided the office of Drugs Controller on 26.03.2003. The receipt of the report from Lok Ayukta is awaited by them,

(c) to (d) Under the provisions of Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 and Rules thereunder, the responsibility for regulating manufacture and sale of drugs including monitoring their quality is vested with the State Governments. The State Governments are advised from time to time to gear up their enforcement machinery to detect and unearth spurious/fake drugs moving in the inter-State commerce as well as to provide and strengthen their regulatory infrastructure; to establish their own State level testing labs to ensure speedy analysis of drug' samples for which they are provided assistance to strengthen and augment their infrastructure facilities in their lab. The State Governments have also been advised to seek strict surveillance over the suspected dealers; collection of survey samples under National Survey Quality Evaluation of Drugs (NSQED) programme; constitution/ reactivation of State drug advisory committees in which various trade

and industry association as well as consumer associations can file representations; establishment of separate intelligence-cum-legal cell; to develop efficient communication facilities and recall procedures; engaging experienced counsel for fighting spurious drug cases etc.

Government of India has taken the following initiatives to tackle the problem of spurious drugs:—

(i) Detailed guidelines in respect of strategies required to be adopted for efficient surveillance over the movement of spurious drugs were given to States on November, 17,1999 to ensure focused surveillance over manufacture and sale of spurious drugs.

(ii) Issues concerning alleged sale of spurious drugs was taken up by Union Health Minister with State Health Ministers in the 7th Conference of Central Council of Health (CCH) & FW held in 12-13 July, 2001. CCH resolved that in order to address issues relating to the increasing reports of spurious drugs/counterfeit drugs, special attention requires to be given to monitor and unearth such illegal activities by constituting a separate intelligence-cum-legal cell in the respective drug control organization and in seeking cooperation of the pharma industry, trade as well as the police.

(iii) Department of Health constituted a broad based Committee under the Chairmanship of DGHS in July, 2001 to examine issues concerning the problem of spurious drugs. The observations and recommendations of this Committee have been circulated on September 16, 2002 to all State Drugs Controllers for their information and necessary action in the matter.

(iv) Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare had specifically written to all Chief Ministers on October 8,2002 on the issue of spurious drugs, seeking their personal intervention to ensure that adequate measures are taken in each State to vigorously pursue the strategies needed to preclude any possibility of menace of spurious products so as to collectively ensure its total eradication.

(v) A meeting of Health Ministers and Senior Officials of 13 majors States of the country was convened by Union Minister of Health

and Family Welfare on 12.11.2002 to ensure concerted action to check any possible movement of spurious drugs in the country and to involve all stake holders to fight this menace. Suggestions/ views which emerged out of discussion were forwarded on January 8, 2003 to all the State Govts, for their information and necessary action. One of the recommendations which emerged as outcome of discussion, was enactment of The Gujarat Prevention of Anti-Social Activities Act, 1985 (PASA) by the State Govts. for deterrent action against offenders.

(vi) In order to increase the number of drug samples tested in the country and to bring down the reporting time to less than a month as against 3 to 6 months presently being taken by many laboratories, a comprehensive plan has been undertaken by Central Govt. under a capacity building project to be implemented with World Bank assistance.

(vii) In order to ensure speedy information exchange and networking of all States and Central Drugs Control Offices and Laboratories, a computerization project has been undertaken by Central Govt.

(viii) A specialized training programme for drugs control officers of all State Govts, responsible for keeping surveillance over possible movement of spurious drugs has been formulated and was conducted from 25 June, 2003 by Central Govt. in cooperation with FDA, Maharashtra at Mumbai.

(ix) Government of India have constituted a Committee of experts on January 27, 2003 under the Chairmanship of Dr. R.A. Mashelkar, Director General, Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) to undertake a comprehensive review of the drugs regulatory system in the country including the problem of spurious and sub-standard drugs and recommend remedial measures to deal with this problem effectively. The Committee has held two meetings on 26.2.2003 and 17.7.2003 to undertake focused examination of two distinct areas of its terms of reference. Consultations with number of eminent persons and stakeholders has also been undertaken. One of the issues to be addressed by this committee is to introduce highly stringent and deterrent punishments for drug offenders.